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PAKISTAN: President Yahya has only a limited chance of succeeding in his latest attempt to resolve the impasse over a new constitution.

Yahya reportedly plans to fly to Dacca, East Pakistan, to press Mujibur Rahman to come to terms with Z. A. Bhutto, West Pakistan's leading politician. Mujib, whose party will have a majority in the constituent assembly, has so far refused to compromise on his program, which would leave the central government responsible only for defense and foreign affairs, and has even refused to go to West Pakistan to discuss the question with the President.

After a meeting with Yahya last week, Bhutto said his party was keeping the door open for a dialogue with Mujib. He reiterated again that without adjustments in the East Pakistani position, his party's decision to boycott the assembly was "irrevocable." Bhutto is also attempting to prevent representatives of other West Pakistani political parties from attending the assembly when it meets on 3 March to begin writing a constitution.

In the meantime, President Yahya has dissolved his cabinet. He might hope to use the offer of cabinet portfolios to bring the contending politicians together, but the dissolution of the civilian cabinet could also pave the way for turning the government over to the military.

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BOLIVIA: Persistent coup rumors may offer President Torres an opportunity to move against some of the leaders of the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR).

Torres has made two recent attacks on the party's "pseudorevolutionaries," accusing them of working with discredited military officers. Last week the minister of the interior publicly denounced the MNR for alleged coup plotting, [REDACTED]

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Despite the spate of coup rumors circulating in La Paz, there is no evidence that the moderate leftist MNR, the largest political party, is sufficiently well organized to make a serious attempt to seize power. Furthermore, there is no generally recognized leader for such a move. The government's campaign, however, apparently has forced at least a temporary merger of the party's competing factions and probably will generate even more reports of coup plotting.

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NOTES

INDIA-PAKISTAN: Efforts are under way to defuse the crisis in relations that resulted from the destruction of a hijacked Indian airliner in West Pakistan on 2 February. According to high Indian officials, Pakistan has agreed to call off its military alert along the border, and India has assured Pakistani diplomats that it does not wish to "escalate the controversy." The Pakistani ambassador in Washington has re-emphasized to US officials that Pakistan is willing to negotiate a settlement. The diplomats--who seem genuinely interested in a settlement--may gradually get the upper hand, but politicians in both countries will still be tempted to use strong popular feelings about the hijacking to improve their positions.

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HUNGARY: Personnel changes in the state hierarchy are expected in connection with the national election called for 25 April. The positions of both the defense and foreign ministers appear to be weak and other aging government leaders could be slated for replacement, especially because so few changes were made at the party congress last November. Technically at least, the Hungarian electorate has been given new authority to nominate counter-candidates to those supported by the party and this could lead to a few contests during the month of "electioneering" preceding the balloting.

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BRAZIL: An interministerial commission has concluded that the decree of 1969, which prohibits the buying and owning of land by foreigners, prejudices economic development and should be completely revised. The decree has not been enforced vigorously. Corporations engaged in large-scale lumbering and cattle ranching, for example, were exempted by administrative decision, and activities of individuals were regulated rather than prohibited. Revision presumably would do little more than legitimize current practice because the commission deems it inadvisable to return to the pre-1969 indiscriminatory land ownership policy.

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